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ABSTRACT

Focusing on actors' employment problems, part 1 of this report describes data collected by Actor's Equity primarily in terms of: (1) membership files; (2) the organization's contract department; (3) pension and welfare funds; and (4) employment statistics. Part 2 analyzes these data sets in relation to employment, unemployment, risk factors for theatrical productions and individual actors, and the shifting and ambiguous boundaries between commercial and non-profit theater. Part 3 recommends research projects in the areas of: (1) actors' employment, unemployment, and income; (2) actors and agents' responses to uncertainties, risks, and contractual decision-making; and (3) actors' relationships to and movements between different theatrical arts-related activities and the social and economic processes that shape exchanges and competitions between these organizations. An appendix describes 20 types of equity contracts, and tables and figures are included. (JHP)

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Research Division Report #3

Understanding the Employment of Actors

National Endowment for the Arts

September 1977

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A Condensation of a Report by Philip H. Ennis and John Bonin, Wesleyan University, February 1977

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PREFACE

While testifying before Congress in 1975, the Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts was asked for a report on the unemployment of artists. In response to this request, the Research Division produced, Report No. 1, "Employment and Unemployment of Artists: 1970-1975". This report was based in part upon earlier work by the Bureau of the Census and the Bureau of Labor Statistics which had collected data on the employment and unemployment of artists as part of their studies of the U. S. population.

Little of the information in Research Division Report No. 1 had been published before, and the data on employment and unemployment of artists stimulated considerable discussion. Part of the discussion questioned the adequacy of the data, since a special characteristic of the artist labor force, particularly in the performing arts occupations, is that employment periods are often short. In these artistic occupations, artists frequently take jobs in other occupations during the intervals of artistic unemployment and may also hold second jobs to supplement their income. To help improve understanding of this area, Actors' Equity Association offered to the National Endowment for the Arts the opportunity to examine its personnel data files. Mr. Donald Grody, Executive Secretary of Actors' Equity, pointed out that this data source was far more detailed for the professional actor than the data series of the Bureau of the Census and Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The National Endowment for the Arts accepted the opportunity presented by Actors' Equity Association and arranged to make an exploratory examination of this data file with the objective of assessing its utility for further research. This project was undertaken by Dr. Philip H. Ennis, Professor of Sociology, and Dr. John Bonin, Associate Professor of Economics, Wesleyan University. In addition, the investigators arranged for assistance from two consultants, Dr. Muriel Cantor, Professor of Sociology, American University, who has been making a study of personnel data in the files of the Screen Actors' Guild, and Mr. Alan Hewitt, an actor familiar with the Equity data files as a result of conducting studies leading to Equity reports. Mr. Donald Grody assisted in many ways including the organization of a series of intensive meetings between the investigators

and members of the Equity staff (primarily: Trudy Kausman, Contract Department; Carolee Wynne, Membership Department; and Thomas Mallon, Fund Manager of the Equity League Pension and Welfare Trust Fund).

The intensive study conducted during 1976 and 1977 lead to a report that contains conclusions about the research utility of the Actors' Equity Association personnel data files and recommendations for possible new research projects. Throughout this effort the investigators have maintained a strict policy of guaranteeing the security and privacy of individual actors' records.

This report, submitted to the National Endowment for the Arts in February 1977, is condensed here for publication and general distribution. The original report is available to interested persons who may, for example, wish to see a longer Introduction section, footnotes and appendices that have been shortened or omitted from this condensation. The original report may be seen in the Library of the Arts Endowment and is available for interlibrary loan. It is titled: "The Statistical Data Sets of Actors' Equity Association: A Description and Analysis With Recommendations for Research into the State of the American Theater" by Philip H. Ennis and John Bonin, Wesleyan University, February 1977. Arrangements to see or borrow copies of the complete report may be made by contacting the Librarian, National Endowment for the Arts, Washington, D. C. 20506, (202) 634-7640.

Research Division
National Endowment for the Arts
June 1977

INTRODUCTION

We began our empirical research into problems of employment in the contemporary American theatre by meeting in the New York offices of Actors' Equity Association for two days in late June, 1976. Professor Muriel Cantor assisted us, and Equity's Executive Secretary Donald Grody organized a series of intensive meetings with some members of the Equity staff. Alan Hewitt - a professional actor, a member of Actors' Equity, and a consultant to the research staff - provided extensive materials and accompanied the research team throughout these meetings. Since that visit, there have been further communications between the research staff and Equity personnel.

Our report on this research is divided into three parts. The first part describes the data Actors' Equity collects in the course of its routine work and, the second part evaluates the data by asking certain analytical questions concerning the state of the theatre and the economic conditions of its personnel. In the third part, we recommend several research steps to be taken next.

The broader context for our thinking in the following technical discussions and in the research recommendations is first of all, the complex relationship between employment, unemployment, and earnings in the arts. Here, our target of concern is the need to understand sources of employment as well as unemployment, for several factors which affect one may not affect the other at a given moment. Further, we feel attention should be devoted to the problems of measuring employment and unemployment, and to the relationships between the two sets of measures.

If measures of employment and unemployment are to be clarified, and if related public policies are to be informed ones, data of sufficient range and reliability must be readily available. The same can be said with regard to earnings. However, the distribution of earnings among theatrical personnel as well as its aggregate amount are results of practices and policies not identical with those which influence employment and unemployment. Fortunately, these are problems that can be described more fully from data sources discussed below.

Related to the immediate questions of employment, unemployment, and earnings are deeper ones concerning how the variety of career patterns of individual actors intertwine with the changing array of acting jobs available in the theatre. The strategic problem for analysis is how the flow of actors is linked, moment to moment, to available acting jobs which, in turn, are set within a mixed economy and spread throughout a large nation with varying cultural densities.

In the following discussion, we also have in mind a second set of questions. These are related to the fact that professional theatre in the United States, both commercial and non-commercial, is marked by pervasive uncertainty. While the mix of natural talent, training, fortitude, and luck necessary to provide individual success within the theatre is difficult to analyze, there are important and, in our judgment, researchable questions here: How much and in what ways are supply and demand for actors peculiarly determined? Has the length of commercial "runs" been changing? How fast have <u>all</u> the various costs in play production risen?

Any comprehensive study of how the uncertainties of commercial theatre production (under all the various Equity contracts) are differently shared by all the personnel involved would require an updating and extension of data like that collected by Thomas G. Moore in <u>The Economics of the American Theatre</u> (1968). In addition, the ways actors cope with the uncertainties of their profession and the ways producers cope with their needs have to be examined jointly in the natural settings, which means including the non-commercial theatre as well. To understand the total employment of actors, we must, at some point take note of all situations, free market and subsidized, in which actors can and do work.

Finally, in our treatment of Equity's data sets we have in mind a third consideration. Along with the employment of actors and the uncertainty of the theatre is the important relationship between the theatre and the other arts. We need estimates of the extent and direction of these relationships, especially with regard to the exchange of personnel. Knowing more about these exchanges might, in turn, help us to understand other fundamental processes of American cultural life such as the complex struggles among the arts--and also among sections of the country--for money and audiences.

In examining Equity's data resources, these three general considerations will form the basis of the recommendations for research. In addition, and with considerable tentativeness, some recommendations will deal with the housekeeping routines by which Equity and its sister performing arts associations organize their data collection procedures.

ACTORS' EQUITY: A DESCRIPTION OF ITS INTERNAL DATA SETS

Actors' Equity Association has been one of the major affiliates of organized labor's representation of the performers (and some associated personnel) in live theatre for more than half a century. The formal charter from the AFL to performing artists was given in 1919 to the Associated Actors and Artists of America (the four A's) and today includes, along with Equity: Screen Actors Guild (SAG), American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (AFTRA), American Guild of Musical Artists (AGMA), American Guild of Variety Artists (AGVA), Asociacion Puertorriquenas de Artistas y Tecnicos del Espectaculo, Hebrew Actors' Union, Inc., Italian Actors Union, and Screen Extras Guild, Inc. Canadian Actors' Equity Association, headquartered in Toronto, amicably ended formal affiliation with American Equity in 1976, but maintains many reciprocal relations.

The professional affairs of Equity's approximately 20,000 members, nationally headquartered in New York City, are coordinated from its main office in New York, from regional offices in Chicago and Los Angeles, and from a small office in San Francisco. Equity's elected representatives negotiate minimum pay scales and conditions of work with several different types of contracts which Equity maintains with theatrical producers. In addition, Equity monitors the fulfillment of other contractual obligations made between individual Equity members and certain corporate entities producing theatre. Closely related but legally separate, Equity League Pension and Welfare Trust Fund (P&W) was established in 1960 to administer the monies collected from producers and subsequently paid to individual Equity members in pensions. This fund also administers the claims made by Equity members for health benefits to which they are entitled.

In the course of these activities, much information is regularly gathered, organized, and stored for varying periods of time. We note four data sets which are most pertinent. They will be summarized briefly and followed by four other data sources which result from different routine activities of the Association and are of potential interest to the social science research community and to attentive audiences concerned with public policy in the arts.

(1) As a membership organization, Equity's Membership Department records its periodic transactions with each Equity member.

(2) Equity's Contract Department monitors the individual actor's agreement with a producer through setting the required bond to be deposited with Equity for each production. The total amount of the bond is determined by the sum of amounts specified for each of the special clauses in the contracts of each individual Equity player in the production.

(3) The Equity League Pension and Welfare Trust Fund, established in 1960, receives from the producers weekly reports of Equity members' earnings along with appropriate funds.

(4) The fourth data set, which summarizes and condenses the first three, is the employment statistics report periodically assembled by Alan Hewitt and used, in part, by the Equity staff in their assessment of policies to be pursued by the Association.

(5) The "Welfare"part of Pension and Welfare processes the Surgical, Medical, and Hospital claims which Equity members submit as part of their contractual benefits.

(6) Since 1958, Actors' Equity has formalized a set of procedures, known as Rule A, governing the three-way relations between members of the Association, theatrical producers, and theatrical agents. Equity also keeps records as to

the names of franchised agents and the names of Equity members with whom they have exclusive management contracts.

(7) Equity holds membership meetings at least four times a year and the Council of the Association meets once a week. The minutes of these two sets of meetings have been gathered for almost all the years of the Association's existence and are stored in the New York Equity office.

(8) Equity publishes Equity News, a near-monthly newspaper describing the Association's activities. About 60 years of Equity publications are stored in the New York office and in several New York public libraries.

These data sets have a complicated relationship to one another. Our study is mainly concerned with the first four data sets.

The Membership Files

The files of the Membership Department of Actors' Equity is a data set consisting of 42 fields stored, as of May 1973, on computer tape and now on an IBM System 3 Mod 12 computer.

These files contain information on each Equity member drawn from four different sources. First, from the Equity membership application form are taken the actor's professional name, two sets of addresses, two sets of telephone numbers, sex, date of birth, social security number, initiation date and fee, and parent union.

Second, from P&W the member's annual earnings under Equity's jurisdiction is entered into the membership files. This information, supplemented by "manual information" from Equity's Contract Department, is sued to determine the member's dues category. Several other administrative data fields concerned with dues payments are based on the earnings statement.

The third source of information comes from direct communication between the individual member and the Membership Department. From the replies to routine dues billing, notices of balloting in Association elections, and other Equity mailings,

the member's personal information is updated and his membership classification - basically if he can or cannot vote - is entered into the files along with his preference as to confidentiality and as to notification for auditions.

The fourth information source for the Equity membership files comes from the periodic matching of its lists with the membership lists of the other 4 A's unions, particularly SAG and AFTRA, but also on occasion those of AGVA, AGMA, and other sister unions. The main purpose of matching these membership lists (twice a year) is to reassess the dues payments of members in the several unions. Changes in assessments and changes in the status of parent union are entered into the Equity files.

The Contract Department

Equity's Contract Department has the major responsibility to insure conformity of theatrical producers with the general terms of their contracts with Equity. In addition, the Contract Department supervises the contractual arrangements made between a theatrical producer and each individual actor and actress in the particular production. Both these monitorings are done through the bond deposited with Equity by each theatrical producer. The amount of the bond is initially determined, for all the various types of contracts, by the total of two weeks' salary plus fringe benefits for each Equity member employed in the production. An additional flat fee of $50 is also added.

It is at this point, however, that the complexity in assessing the bond's value begins. Over the years there has been an increasing specialization of contracts negotiated by Equity with various kinds of producers. Currently there are nineteen types of contracts. Equity's own employment summaries, however, combine these into eleven major types.

Each type of contract establishes minimum salaries for the different categories of actors, actresses, and stage managers and specifies the supplemental monies due each Equity member as a result of specialized tasks, e.g., Dance Captain, 2nd

Assistant Stage Manager, if member of the Chorus, extraordinary risk, specialty number, and so forth. The resulting complexity of establishing the proper amount of bond for such a diversity of contracts is impressive. Also impressive is Equity's ability to assure that proper payment is made to the actor each week.

Yet another process further complicates the Contract Department's accounting problems. Parallel with the increasing differentiation of types of contracts has been the increasing individualization of contracts made between each performer and the producer. Some performers will bargain for a salary higher than the Equity minimum scale or for a salary guarantee longer than the two-week guarantee, or for both. The setting of each bond for a specific theatrical enterprise is a procedure requiring a close reading of each performer's individual contract, and the Contract Department has evolved, over a number of years, a set of coding and recording procedures which have effectively domesticated the almost Byzantine contractual structures that constitute the legal and economic basis of current theatrical practice.

Further, these procedures are not as formally codified, as say, those of P&W but they are readily understood by the personnel in the several Equity departments which handle the data. The entire record of the Contract Department's work since 1950 is contained in ordinary bound notebooks with hand entered, pencil and inked notations, all stored in the New York Equity offices. Similar records exist in the two regional offices. The New York office duplicates, but not entirely, the regional records.

Pension and Welfare Data

P&W is financed by producer contributions. Although the fund is operationally and legally distinct from Actors' Equity Association, according to Thomas Mallon, the Fund Manager, approximately 95% of the fund's participants are Equity cardholders. The other 5% are people presently retired or no longer active in the theatre. P&W records contain an account of the earnings subject to pension benefits for all of the individuals who have worked under Equity jurisdiction since 1960.

Along with collecting payments for pension fund, P&W routinely collects and processes information on the employment and earnings of actors. First, the Contract Department provides data from the initial bonding procedure which allows P&W to create "memo books" similar to the contract book discussed above. Then, during the rehearsal and performance, the producing company provides weekly reports on all actors employed, listing by name and social security number each actor's earnings for the week subject to pension payments, including percentage of gross ticket receipts when appropriate. These weekly reports are used to calculate the production company's total payment to the pension fund, which accompanies the reports.

One important fact should be mentioned here. An individual actor's earnings subject to pension carry a weekly ceiling of $1,500 to $2,000 depending on the type of contract Equity has with the producer. Consequently, actual overtime and percentage of gross are reported only for actors making below-ceiling earnings. Since the production company's pension payment is calculated as a percentage of the sum of all reported earnings (the percentage depends on the production type), the production company does not report above-ceiling earnings for any individual actor.

This weekly data is stored with references to production type or show, in file books beginning in 1964 and on computer tape from 1972 to the present. Aggregate data on annual employment and earnings for individual actors is readily available at P&W from 1961 to the present. P&W has computer printouts made each year which list, for each individual actor, total work-weeks and earnings subject to pension (both under the Equity card) in all previous years back to 1961. This printout also contains a more detailed description of the current year's employment and earnings for the individual actor. Each week of employment is listed with such information as weekly earnings subject to pension, production type, and name of show.

The more aggregate data on earnings in previous years is divided into five categories. These categories correspond to five different accrual schedules determining the percentage of covered earnings accrued toward a normal pension. Total pension credits are also listed and divided into these five categories. The accrual schedules have changed over time (the most recent change occurred January 1, 1974). The majority of production types are currently under one category, known as Schedule A.

All P&W records contain the actor's social security number so that cross references within the P&W data and linkages with external sources are possible. Also, the detailed printout data for the current year, referred to above, is available at some cost from computer tapes back to 1972. The more aggregate data is readily available from the current year's computer printout back to 1961. Clearly the P&W data is an important source of information on employment and earnings for the individual actor. Further processing can yield meaningful estimates on the districation of earnings among actors and the duration of employment within any year under the Equity card.

Employment Statistics Compiled by Alan Hewitt

Alan Hewitt prepared annual employment reports on the professional theatre from Equity data sources. In constructing a data base for these reports, Hewitt regularly collects and aggregates weekly statistics on work-weeks under the Equity card. A work-week is defined as one actor working one week. In any given week, the number of work-weeks recorded corresponds exactly to the number of actors employed. However, once the data is aggregated over time, the number of actors employed cannot be determined.

Most of the data reported by Hewitt is aggregated into annual totals of work-weeks under the Equity card. Tables from his personal data collection record quarterly totals of work-weeks under the Equity card. For purposes of data consolidation, Hewitt assumes that the theatre season runs from the beginning of June until the end of May. Since the unit of account is the week, Hewitt has found it necessary to include 53 weeks in the 1966 - 1967 season and the 1971 - 1972 season. In the most aggregate form, annual totals of work-weeks per season (combined U. S. and Canada) are recorded for the periods 1945 - 1953 and 1961 - present. For these same periods, Hewitt reports work-weeks for the high, low, and median week in each year. Consequently, some crude notion of the variability of actors' employment during this time is available since we know the high, low, and median number of actors employed. A similar quarterly division of total work-weeks is available from Hewitt's personal sources for the period 1968 - present.

Unfortunately, Hewitt's quarterly division does not correspond to the time periods used to define government fiscal quarters. Hewitt's aggregations run December through February, March through May, June through August, and September through November. However, the data in the Hewitt summaries can be reconstructed to fit government quarters from his private records.

For this same period, 1968 - present, Hewitt has divided his employment data into three major categories: employment type, regional and production type (Hewitt's term here is "employment area"). Consequently, both quarterly data and the more aggregate annual data on work-weeks within each category is available. Each category also included the total number of work-weeks in the time period. Hence, the addition of all subdivisions within each category yields the same sum, the total number of work-weeks in the period.

Four subdivisions exist for the category of employment type. These are: principal, chorus, stage manager, and extra. For purposes of comparing employment date 1968 - present with that in the earlier period 1948 - 1953, this subdivision is important. Chorus Equity merged with Actors' Equity in 1955 so Equity data in the period 1948 - 1953 excludes employment data for chorus members.

The category of regional employment is subdivided according to the three present (and one former) regional Equity offices administering the contracts: New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles (and Toronto up to June 1976). Again, for purposes of data comparability across time periods, this subdivision is important. Toronto employment data includes ballet and opera contracts which would normally be administered by AGMA in the U. S. However, by special arrangement with AGMA, these contracts fall under the jurisdiction of Equity in Canada.(Canadian figures provide individual totals for theatre, opera, and ballet as well as a grand total.)

The third major category, production type, is subdivided into: Broadway productions, road productions, dinner theatre, stock, L.O.R.T. (resident theatre), Off-Broadway, other local, young audiences, cafe and club, industrial shows, guest artists, special contracts, and extras. Depending upon the time period

under consideration, some of the subdivisions must be incorporated into a residual class. No one data source has entries for all subdivisions during 1968 - present. For example, Hewitt has compiled a chart of annual work-weeks 1969 - present subdivided into Broadway production, road production, stock dinner theatre, L.O.R.T., Off-Broadway, children's theatre, industrial shows, and guest artists. The residual class for this chart would include cate and club, special, extras, and other locals which comprise Hollywood and Bay areas, off-Loop, and studio productions. On the other hand, Hewitt's quarterly tables 1968 - 1975 omit several of these subdivisions while the quarterly tables for 1975 - 1976 include a new one, Showcase (NYC). In the category production type, before data from different time periods can be used in annual or quarterly terms, some standardized classification of subdivisions including a residual class must be determined. This residual class must be defined to include all subdivisions for which data is unavailable in any time period under consideration. Hewitt's data records might be useful in solving such a problem.

Hewitt's annual reports contain a wealth of other information on employment and earnings. For the 1973 - 1974 and 1974 - 1975 seasons, charts which subdivide regionally each production type and employment type are reported (similar data is available for each year since 1967). For example, work-weeks in New York for principals in 1974 - 1975 are recorded. Or work-weeks in dinner theatre in Chicago for 1974 - 1975 can be found. As part of each annual report, Hewitt also includes data on membership divided into two categories, total members and paid-up memberships. The annual totals of Equity memberships during 1948 - 1953 and 1961 - present are available in these terms. However, the U. S.-Canada and Chorus-Actor distinctions discussed earlier cannot be separated in this membership data.

ANALYSIS OF EQUITY'S DATA SETS

How can these four data sets help answer the questions that initiated this inquiry? Even though these sets are closely interconnected, and some efforts should be made to integrate them, we will treat them here as being independent - by presenting the following matrix. It confronts each of the

main problem areas - unemployment/employment, risk allocation, and theatre and the other arts - with the four main data sets.

FIGURE 1

Problem Area

Data Set	1 Employment/ Unemployment	2 Risk Allocation	3 Theatre & The Other Arts
1. Membership Department	11	21	31
2. Contract Department	12	22	32
3. Pension & Welfare	13	23	33
4. Hewitt's Summaries on Employment	14	24	34

In looking first at the problem of employment and unemployment among actors, basic consideration is the definition of the professional actor. Depending upon how the universe of actors is operationally defined, the percentage employed as actors will vary. The two main alternatives for such an operational definition are: the total memberships of all professional theatrical associations; and the self-designation by an individual that his or her main occupation is that of actor, supported by some asserted evidence that the person has been employed in that occupation, in a survey of known reliability and validity.

There are difficulties, of course, in either of these definitions. One goal of the research program proposed in the final section of our report is to find a means of reconciling estimates made from both types.

We begin with the professional theatrical association method of defining the universe of actors. The four data sets (Figure 1, cells 11-14) contribute to a complete and accurate accounting of employment and unemployment in the theatre in only a limited way. Even if they were fully integrated, which they are not, the resulting data pool would not produce the measures needed.

The reasons are several. As to information from the membership files (cell 11), there is an unknown number of paid-up members who are not working as actors at present because they hold other full-time or part-time jobs. Also, there is a more or less known number of Equity card holders who may or may not be working as actors because they are in those various categories of membership indicating less than full employment under Equity jurisdiction. The difficulty with all these membership categories is that it is impossible, from the membership file alone, to state how much of what kind of employment in the theatre they represent in any given year.

Finally, and this is probably the largest group numerically, there are those Equity card holders whose theatrical employment is under the jurisdiction of one or more of the 4 A's unions other than Equity. How large is this group? An Equity sponsored survey of its members conducted in 1972 reported that 55% of the Equity membership also belonged to SAG, that 49% belonged to AFTRA, and that 10% belonged to AGVA. Further, almost three quarters, 73%, of the respondents to that same survey reported that they had sought work in a performing union other than Equity. However, only about 8% of the respondents actually worked at that time under AFTRA's jurisdiction, 12% under SAG's, and 1% each under AGVA's or AGMA's card. Without an amalgamation of all the 4 A's membership lists as an initial step, it will be impossible to get a complete accounting of the number of professional actors. The current practice of semiannually cross-checking the Equity membership list with those of the other 4 A's associations is a positive beginning for estimating the extent of over-lapping membership.

The Contract Department data (Cell 12) is in its present form not suitable for the primary tracking of theatrical employment because of its manner of tabulation. The "contract books" are oriented to an accurate assessment of the producer's bond. While they do record the duration of actual employment, their form of entry defies retrieval within reasonable costs. When each theatrical enterprise has produced weekly employment reports to P&W (Cell 13) this is the single best source of both the extent of employment and the amount of earnings. Hewitt's summaries (Cell 14) based mainly on the contract and the membership department's data, provide valuable, if partial, estimates of employment. More of this below.

Among the difficulties of defining the universe of actors by membership records is their inability to provide specific information about an important category which exists in the survey alternative, as, for example, in the Decennial Census and the Bureau of Labor Statistics reports. In addition to the survey categories of "employed" and "experienced unemployed", there are other categories, including an important one called "not in the labor force, but worked 1960-1970". Here is a census table for the entire work force taken from the 1970 Decennial Census and cited in Research Division Report #1, National Endowment for the Arts, April, 1976 (Table 12, p. 28).

Table 1

Percent Employment of All Members of the Workforce - 1970

	Men	Women
Employed	81	60
Experienced Unemployed	3	3
Not on Labor Force but Worked 1960-1970	16	37
	100%	100%
N =	(58.8 million)	(48.1 million)

The table shows that for the 106.9 million individuals who are or have been in the work force from 1960 to 1970, men have an 84% (81 plus 3) current participation in the work force while women have substantially less, 63% (60 plus 3). Among the 16% of the men who were not in the labor force in 1970, probably a large proportion were retired. Since the age distribution of men and women is similar, some other factors must account for the fact that the percentage of experienced women no longer in the work force is more than twice that of men. These figures serve as the baseline for comparable data on artists in general and actors in particular in Table 2.

Table 2

Percent Employment of the Artist Workforce - 1970

	All Artists (Except Actors)		Actors	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Employed	85	87	50	33
Experience Unemployed	3	5	23	18
Not in Labor Force, Last Worked 1960-1970	12	8	27	49
	100%	100%	100%	100%
N =	(618,000)	(256,900)	(11,300)	(11,800)

The category "All Artists" may be too inclusive to be useful. Still several things stand out quite clearly in the data. First, among all artists except actors, men and women have high and similar rates of employment compared to both the total working population and especially to actors. Second, compared to the total working population and to other artists, actors show a dramatically low rate of employment, a high rate of unemployment, and a high rate of withdrawal from the work

force. Further, although there are an approximately equal total number of men and women in the acting profession (11,300 men and 11,800 women) compared to the more than two to one ratio of men to women in all the other arts, almost half the actresses compared to a quarter of the actors were not participating in the labor force in 1970

To clarify the relationship between Equity data, as collected and recorded in Hewitt's reports, and the Census-BLS data, we have constructed a table presenting concepts of employment and total labor force for actors only. (The Census-BLS rows are taken from the category "actors" in Tables 4 through 9 of the Endowment's Research Division Report #1.)

Table 3

Employment of Actors 1970-1975
(in thousands of individuals)

Labor Force	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975
Number of Paid-up Equity members	14.6	15.0	15.5	16.0	16.5	17.0
Census-BLS Total number of "experienced" actors in work force	14.1	19.0	18.0	16.0	19.0	20.0
Employment						
Number of Equity members working in high work week for the year	4.5	4.2	4.2	4.5	4.5	4.5
Census-BLS employment (as difference between total labor force and unemployment)	9.4	10.0	10.0	9.0	9.0	13.0

The table exhibits two major problems of data reconciliation between the sources. First, the Census-BLS concept of total experienced labor force does not include all of Equity's total membership. Second, there is substantial employment of actors outside of the Equity jurisdiction, much of it probably under cards from SAG, AFTRA, AGVA, and other sister unions. Note that the Equity paid-up measurement has grown at a steady rate of about 3% per year during 1970-75 while the Census-BLS measure of the labor force has fluctuated greatly from an annual increase of 30% to a decrease of 12% in one year. For the entire period, Equity paid-up membership increased by 15% while the Census-BLS experiences labor force measure increased by 34.6%. Until 1975, employment under the Equity card in the highest week reported was about one-half of total employment measured by the Census-BLS. If the median work week were chosen from Equity data, the order of magnitude would be about one-third of the Census-BLS employment measure until 1975. Clearly, a substantial amount of many actors' professional employment occurs outside the Equity card.

The variability of the Census-BLS measure of the total experienced labor force contrasted with the steady growth rate in Equity paid-up membership suggests inadequacies in the Census-BLS measure. Indeed, Table 12 of the Endowment's report cited above gives further information about the scope of this problem for 1970, the Census year. The total experienced civilian labor force of actors consists of those employed in the Census week (the last week of March), 9.4 thousand, plus "the experienced unemployed", 4.7 thousand. In addition, another 8.96 thousand actors are recorded as "not in the labor force, last worked from 1960 - 1970". Would these actors hold union cards and keep their membership paid up? If so, the total Census-BLS figure most comparable to Equity's total paid-up membership in 1970 would be 23.1 thousand paid-up actors. This is not simply a definitional problem. If the larger number constructed above is used, only 41% were employed. We need to reconcile the two sources.

A further problem of data comparability arises because the Census-BLS data includes dancers as a separate category. The number and employment of dancers holding Equity or other union cards would be included in the union data. Interestingly, the category "dancer" is the only other occupational category for

which the listing "not in labor force, last worked 1960-1970" increases the total pool as substantially as it does for actors. The number of actors in this category as a percent of the Census-BLS total experienced work force is 63.6%. The comparable figure for dancers is 74.2%. No other occupational category reported has a comparable statistic greater than 30%.

Clearly, the definition of the labor force against which employment statistics will be compared is an important issue from the viewpoint of public policy. Union data from Equity and other sister unions can aid in making this definition more precise. The membership department of Equity has data on members who have taken out retirement cards and who would, therefore, be excluded from the actors' labor force as defined in the Census-BLS data. P&W has data on weeks worked each year under the Equity card. Some criteria in terms of duration of employment in previous years could be set to help determine a meaningful estimate for the actors' labor force. If sister unions collect data similar to that of P&W, social security numbers can be used to match employment records under all union cards.

The data on an actor's earnings which is available from the two Equity sources, membership and P&W, includes biases worth mentioning if it is to be used to build statistics on the total earnings of an individual actor. Membership records earnings subject to Equity dues are divided by dues category. The ceiling category for dues is $30,000 per year. Consequently, earnings above this amount are not further subdivided. At the same time, the membership department initially uses contractual earnings so that overtime income and percentage of gross are recorded only when reported by the individual member, or when determined from P&W data. On the other hand, P&W records earnings are subject to pension only. The ceiling, for pension purposes, is $1500-$2000 per week. Consequently, income data under the Equity card compiled from these two sources is likely to be very accurate for many subdivisions but provide no subdivision in the uppermost tail of the distribution. The earnings of "stars" can only be estimated from examining individual contractual agreements along with any information on gross receipts. However, to the extent that policy questions require analysis of the lower earnings' categories, the Equity data seems sufficient to characterize income under the Equity card. Any serious biases can be eliminated by cross-references between membership and P&W data.

It is clear, then, that several research questions on employment and earnings under the Equity card can be addressed using currently collected data. For instance, seasonality of total employment can be studied from Hewitt's quarterly data. Consequently, any bias introduced by the Census week can be discussed. At the same time, the growth of employment under the Equity card can be analyzed from Hewitt's data. These growth rates can be compared with growth rates from other industries and national averages. Although these growth rates conceal the distribution of employment among actors, they provide some insight into the change in overall employment opportunities under the Equity card. Comparisons with other industries and national averages give some indication of the health of the theatre. The relationship of growth of employment to growth of Equity membership provides some insight into the unemployment problem.

Profiles of the earnings and employment of individual actors can be constructed using weeks worked per year and earnings subject to pension under the Equity card from P&W data. An initial screening of membership records of the parent union would provide some idea of the importance of multiple professional employment opportunities. Our impression is that while a large proportion of Equity members hold other union cards, the converse is not true. Therefore, we would expect total membership in all actors' unions to exceed Equity membership. Indeed, important larger problems such as constructing a career profile of an actor which would show the total annual earnings as a professional actor and the duration of professional employment per year require the compilation and coordination of data from Equity and its sister unions.

Since data similar to that in Equity's P&W fund exists within the other unions, broader questions on employment and earnings for individual actors can be evaluated. Because employment under any single card is not likely to be the sole indicator of employment as an actor, the issue as to whether or not an actor is employed in any year becomes complex. Some criteria, perhaps similar to that used by the BLS, will have to be applied to distinguish part-time work from full-time work. Consequently, the duration of employment under all cards in any year is an important statistic. Again, the definition of

this segment of the labor force may hinge on length of employment in the recent past. It should be noted that a similar accounting problem is faced by any union in a trade where short-term work contracts are standard (e.g., longshoremen). Furthermore, data on earnings for an actor must be broadened to include not just income earned under a union card but other income or support supplements. Clearly, income of individual actors will be difficult to calculate. Nevertheless, an essential step in building this total is the calculation of earnings under the union cards from data similar to that available at Equity.

We now come to the second general set of problems, those dealing with risks in the theatre both for the theatrical production as an entity and for the individual actor. In our previous discussion we considered the data sets only in terms of the individual actor as the analytical unit. However, the Contract Department's books (Figure 1, Cell 22) and the P&W data (Cell 23) can provide information about the universe of theatrical productions which have contracted for Equity personnel since 1950 or 1960 (depending on the data set used). It is possible to present data from a given time period on the full range of theatrical enterprises offered to the American public. The type of contract, the amount of bond, the size and nature of the cast for each production are readily available from the Contract Department. The duration of rehearsals and the lengths of the runs are available from P&W. These are raw materials required for the analysis of theatrical risk taking.

Other materials are necessary, to be sure. The amounts of capital invested in the different types of commercial theatre have to be identified, along with the kinds of secondary (and further) rights allocation such as record albums and film production. Similarly, for the non-commercial theatre, the extent and kind of funding these organizations receive has to be identified.

Another important area of study in this regard is the shifting and ambiguous boundary between the commercial and the non-profit theatre. The development of the Off-Broadway, Showcase, Workshop, and the new Mini-contract all exemplify

the ways creativity and risk uneasily mix. Finally, the outcome of each type of theatrical enterprise has to be assessed. There are objective measures such as length of run, return on investment, prizes awarded, and subsequent derivatives of the enterprise. More subjective is the assessment of quality and impact of the production through an evaluation of critical responses to it.

Parallel to the individual theatrical production as the unit of risk or the theatrical company in non-commercial theatre, is the uncertainty of the career of the individual actor. The P&W data (Cell 23) and the membership files (Cell 21) can provide the vital data base for time series analyses of how actors begin their work, and how they move through the various types of theatre and through various periods of employment. When taken together these form the empirical base of the career.

We turn, finally, to an assessment of how Equity's data sets can provide answers to the third set of questions on the theatre in relation to the other arts. Here the diagnosis is quite simple: the data is not very helpful. The membership files and the P&W disaggregated data do provide the basis for an analysis of how actors move from geographical place to place and from one type of theatrical employment to another. An analysis over time of these records in conjunction with the comparable data from SAC and AFTRA would reveal the shifts of theatrical personnel from live theatre to movies and television. But we need to know much more to respond to the complexities of the question.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RESEARCH

We will describe three sets of research projects, each dealing with one of the basic problem areas discussed in the introduction of the report. The first has to do with the assessment of employment, unemployment, and earnings among actors. It is widely believed that those working as actors, actresses, stage managers, directors, choreographers, and other types of creative theatre personnel suffer higher rates of unemployment than the majority of others in the work force. Yet there is at present no reliable or accepted

measure of unemployment. The first and central recommendation of this report is research which will provide the federal government, state and local governments, and scholarly research agencies with current and accurate measurements of employment in the American theatre.

The projects needed to establish this data are outlined here. Their order is from easy to hard, from relatively cheap to relatively expensive, from resources now in place to resources which need to be assembled. The central idea is a step by step plan for deep and continuing data resources beginning with the question of employment. The institutional location, financial basis, and social organization of the research proposed here is left quite open.

EMPLOYMENT, UNEMPLOYMENT, AND EARNINGS

The first project should be to assemble the extant data on employment among American theatrical personnel. This involves several different steps outlined here quite tentatively because the interests and scheduling of the various constituencies cannot be stated in advance. At the outset, the leadership of the 4 A's associations should agree on a data exchange and consolidation program. The relevant technical personnel of the associations along with the social science researchers involved should meet to create a single amalgamated data set consisting of the disaggregated records of members' weekly employment, amount of earnings, welfare and pension benefits, and whatever other useful information is available from the several data sets. The aim should be to create a consolidated and continuing record of all data relevant to employment and earnings under the jurisdiction of the separate 4 A's associations. The main data sets with which this amalgamation should begin are Equity's membership files, its P&W records, and comparable data from the other 4 A's associations. These data sets should have maximum interchangeability within and between each of the 4 A's associations. Apparently the first moves in this direction have begun among the 4 A's unions.

Actors' employment and earnings data from P&W could be consolidated from the theatrical producers who originate the weekly reports to Equity, AFTRA, and SAG. The expense and complexity

of data consolidation from all the producers might be far greater than from the 4 A's unions because the producers are more scattered and their information more disaggregated. The 4 A's files are more concentrated by far. But such a project would be possible and, in fact, has some attractive aspects. If the producers were to become the sole source or even a participating source of routine theatrical employment and earnings data, the costs of so doing would clearly invite the collection of routine data about the producers' input costs from all sources as well as a variety of data concerning such matters as investment and capital returns.

The next step in this project should be an exploration of the data sets relating to other creative theatrical personnel, ranging from directors and choreographers to the set, costume, lighting, and make-up designers. These data sets should be examined for their possible integration into the larger pool of actors' data so that the extent and direction of overlapping and alternating career lines among theatrical personnel can be documented and traced even though the absolute numbers of such moves may be slight.

This amalgamation of existing data sets is a technically demanding and politically sensitive task. One of the major problems of such an enterprise would be the question of the structure of the data consolidation organization. How independent should it be? How connected should it be to the 4 A's associations, to the diverse array of theatrical producers and their extant organizations, to the social science research agencies, or to various governmental bodies (e.g., Bureau of Labor Statistics, Bureau of the Census, the Arts Endowment itself)?

The extent of employment, unemployment, and earnings of actors cannot be fully measured by the routine records of their professional associations alone. At least three other kinds of data are necessary: paid employment other than theatrical work; unemployment compensation payments; and various modes of direct and indirect support such as family and the use of savings. Only a survey approach can provide such data.

Our next recommendation, therefore, is to create a sample survey of theatrical personnel from the universe of the amalgamated data sets constructed from all the theatrical associations that are included in the fruits of the recommendations above. There are a number of questions that have to be resolved about such a survey. We simply raise them here. How large should the sample of theatre personnel be? How should the sample be stratified in terms of geographical region, parent union, age, sex, length of theatrical experience, earnings, and so forth? How intensive or extensive should the survey be with respect to information beyond matters of employment and unemployment? Here we have in mind: the manner of recruitment and training in theatre skills; information about the alternations of life style and activities in periods of theatrical work and in periods of unemployment; the range of attitudes and beliefs with respect to the theatre, and to the arts in general, and to other areas of interest. Another question regarding the survey has to do with its regularity. It could be thought of as the first of a baseline series with a periodicity of anywhere from five to twenty years. It could also be a large-scale model of a projected smaller series of regular data collections which could be managed from any number of research settings.

The main content of the survey, it is important to reassert, should be the most complete information possible about the places and duration of employment, both in and out of the theatre, the compensation derived therefrom, the variety of ways the individual is supported when not employed in the theatre, and the information necessary to assemble and portray the varieties of theatrical careers.

As noted above, the number of actors defined by association membership differs from the number of actors identified by the Census and the BLS. Until and unless these two ways of counting the population of actors are reconciled, it will be difficult to base public policies concerned with the theatre arts on a firm empirical base. Also, as we have argued, there is a clear need for a continuing assessment of employment and unemployment in the theatre. For these reasons, we recommend the development of a means of "triangulating" the two types of measures of employment among the theatrical population. Within acceptable margins of error, the two bases of estimating the number of professional actors and their ratio of employment

and unemployment must agree with each other. We propose matching the sample survey based on the amalgamated theatrical association membership lists with another, a work force survey of the Census, BLS, or Current Population Survey type. Such a work force survey could be part of the normal activities of these agencies or it could be a special effort aimed at theatrical personnel only or even at the full range of artistic personnel in the nation. In any case, the key task of the work force survey would be to provide the basis of reconciliation between estimates of the number of professional actors (and their employment) based on associational records and those based on labor force surveys.

When this data reconciliation has been accomplished, we propose a continuing survey located either in an already established government survey setting, such as the BLS or Current Population Survey, or in an independent or university based research facility. In either case the continuing measurement of theatrical employment, unemployment, and earnings whether by a series of discrete surveys or by a panel design (i.e., repeated interviews over time with the same sample of respondents) is an important research goal. The continuing survey could be expanded, step by step, into a national survey of the personnel in all the arts. Such a program should be flexible enough to allow specific sub-samples to be added to the basic sampling frame. For example, the boundary between professional theatre and amateur theatre is an important and little studied zone. The two-way transfer of people and theatrical resources at this boundary enriches or impoverishes American artistic life in an unknown fashion. Similarly the age factor in the theatre is little understood and would be a way of identifying the movements into the theatre by the young and out of it by the old.

Uncertainty in the Arts

Current research tools available to guide policy planning in the arts cannot reach directly in the languages of individual motivations nor can they capture the subtle mixtures of rewards which sustain those motivations. The complex changing arrangements which organize the theatre and its personnel cannot be readily domesticated at present. Of the many models which seek to describe and explain how these things work, we recommend two.

Decision-making under uncertainty is one such rubric which may be of signal importance. The substantial research already done in this area and the recent development of analytical models to examine the relationships between professional sport and public policy[1] are useful guides to any comprehensive study of the role of uncertainty in the arts. Initially, research could focus on the welfare of an actor as a decision-making unit. An important issue to address is the effect of differential degrees of the contractual risk on an actor's willingness to supply labor. How does an actor compensate for increased risk of employment and income? Also, research has been done on the effect of uncertainty on work incentives in other institutional settings.[2] The methodology used in that research seems appropriate for similar studies in the arts. Once developed, a decision model will provide hypotheses about the behavioral response of an actor to changes in the distribution of his expected risks. At the same time, an actor's response to changes in employment opportunities other than acting could be studied and attempts to analyze changes in the overall welfare factors could be undertaken.

Further analytical study could treat the development of the actor's work contract with particular emphasis on differential risk-sharing between actor and producer. The attitudes toward risk-bearing attributed to each party will influence the eventual agreement on risk-sharing struck in the contractual bargain. There is some precedence for study of this problem of contract formation in another field.[3] Similar analysis can be

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1 Roger Noll, ed. GOVERNMENT AND THE SPORTS BUSINESS (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1974).

2 See, for example, J. Bonin, "Work Incentives and Uncertainty On A Collective Farm", JOURNAL OF COMPARATIVE ECONOMICS (forthcoming); and M.K. Block and J.M. Heineke, "The Allocation of Effort Under Uncertainty: The Case of Risk-Averse Behavior," JOURNAL OF POLITICAL ECONOMY, 81 (March/April, 1973): 376-385.

3 Cf.J. Stiglitz, "Incentives and Risk Sharing in Sharecropping," REVIEW OF ECONOMIC STUDIES, 41 (April, 1974): 219-255.

applied to examine the changes in the actor's minimum terms of employment as determined by Equity bargaining. By deducing the effect of external changes on the actor's willingness to bear risk, testable hypotheses can be developed. For example, how does the ability of an actor to spread risks and "hedge his bets" by belonging to more than one union affect his behavior? It is here, of course, that the special institutional nature of non-commercial theatre must be taken into account along with the exchange of theatrical personnel and of artistic property between the various types of commercial and non-commercial theatres. By tracing changes in the external environment and in Equity's responses to these changes, the dynamics of contract formation can be analyzed.

Any analytical model of the actor's decision making has to take account of the actor's agent, and Equity collects information on franchised agents, i.e., agents who are permitted to negotiate Equity contracts. Clearly, this intermediate person in the bargaining process between the actor and the producer is extremely important in the arts. The agent not only negotiates a client's salary but also actively seeks employment opportunities for his client. In the arts, risks and financial incentives affect the agent's behavior since he is generally paid a percentage of his client's salary. Therefore, the analytical study of decision making under uncertainty in the arts should include the agent in his role of an intermediary between the actor and the producer.

No such model as we are discussing would be complete without the perspective of theatrical producers for the producer also is a decision-making unit faced with considerable uncertainty. Will the play be a hit or a flop? In this environment, the producer's decisions must be combined with the actor's decisions to fully understand the eventual outcome of policy changes. The general and difficult question is how the different mixes of input costs affect the decisions to produce one type or another type of theatrical production and the amount of each type. The control and substitution of those input costs are important variables. Also, the size and availability of the pool of actors and other creative, technical, and craft personnel are important factors. Clearly, it seems necessary to review other data sources, mainly from

the production side, in the same fashion that this report has examined Equity's operations.

The second model would combine the study of the career patterns of individual actors with the study of how acting jobs are created. It would provide a way to see how the institutional complex of American theatre moves actors through a series of jobs. From the point of view of the actor, the series is called his career. The totality of jobs is also a dynamic record of the theatre's social structure. Little systematic work of an empirical sort has been done in this area. Harrison White's Chains of Opportunity: System Models of Mobility in Organization (1970) might help point the way to building a useful, analytical model, but finally such a model should await the completion of the earlier recommendations.

Theatre and the Other Arts

In this third problem area, two projects are recommended. Many artists, especially young ones, are gifted in several ways and energetically pursue achievement in more than one art form. One of our proposals here addresses the questions: How often do we find multi-talented artists? What social, geographical, and institutional conditions encourage or hinder either the simultaneous or successive participation in more than one art form? What are the characteristics of artists who do or do not extend their work into different artistic media? The data which can provide some empirical basis for resolving these questions will result from our recommendations on employment above. Understanding the movement and exchange of theatrical personnel from live theatre to movies to television is a necessary beginning to understanding the relations between theatre and other arts. These movements can be traced from the consolidated membership lists of the 4 A's associations and from P&W records of employment and earnings. It will be possible to trace an actor's career as he moves across several media--live theatre, movies, television--and as he moves across the varieties of production forms--Broadway, stock, residential theatre, and so on. Furthermore, when the proposed sample survey based on the theatrical associational lists is assembled, the inquiry can widen its scope

to trace the full range of artistic activities the actor has engaged in, the nature of his training, and specific influences, such as those of family, peers, and teachers, which moved him towards or away from the various artistic forms.

The final study we recommend is to identify the social and economic processes that shape the exchanges and competitions between theatre and the other arts. The theatre exchanges personnel, artistic properties, and a series of more intangible styles, techniques, and values with others. The theatre also competes for those resources. Clearly this is an extremely broad and complex problem. The research proposed here can reach only a small part, although a strategic one.

The exchanges and competitions among the arts have a spatial dimension in the United States that, inadvertently, provide a natural laboratory for their study. We refer to the state arts councils in the fifty states. These agencies distribute federal, state, and private funds for the support of the arts. Their routine records have been augmented by a recent intensive study of their operations sponsored by the Arts Endowment. Some of the data from that study is available and is likely to be valuable material on which a study of the relationship of theatre and the other arts can draw. In addition, the amalgamated membership lists of the 4 A's associations can provide additional information on the geographical distribution of theatrical work in the United States.

More specifically, the need here is for an exploratory project designed to evaluate the problems of assembling an adequate data base for a study of the exchanges and competitions of theatre personnel and institutions with the other arts within the spatial framework of the fifty states.

Two final comments about these recommendations. First, none of them is a fully developed proposal, but rather each is a more or less specific guide. The additional work required to put these proposals in operation varies considerably from one to the other. Second, the problems and bases of these projects are interrelated. Decisions to implement any one project should be made with the problems of all in mind. The proposed research need not be implemented all at the same time, but in such an order as to allow maximum utility for all the problems discussed.

APPENDIX: TYPES OF EQUITY CONTRACTS

1) Production - Broadway, National Tours, and Bus and Truck Tours.

2) Special Production - Theatres with limited seating capacity in the Broadway area. (Occasionally used elsewhere)

3) Stock, Resident Dramatic - Summer and/or Winter Stock where resident companies are engaged for a series of consecutive productions and a minimum number of resident actors are employed.

4) Stock, Non-Resident Dramatic - For a Stock company which maintains no resident company but jobs in new casts for a series of consecutive productions.

5) Stock, Indoor Musical - Which may or may not maintain a resident company presenting a series of consecutive musical productions.

6) Stock, Outdoor Musical - Covers three outdoor theatres presenting a series of musical productions.

7) Dinner Theatres - Where a series of consecutive productions are presented in conjunction with dinner service with the price of admission covering both.

8) L.O.R.T. - Non-profit repertory and non-repertory resident theatres with rehearsal and playing periods longer than those in Stock.

9) Industrial - Productions presented to audiences and clients in industry.

10) Young Audiences - Productions created or adapted for children up through and including junior high school level.

11) Off-Broadway - Theatres with not more than 499 seats in geographically limited areas in New York City.

12) Mini-Contract - Reduced scale contract, similar to Off-Broadway, but for use in theatres of less than 200 seats.

13) Hollywood Area Theatres and Bay Area Theatres (HAT/BAT) - An Off-Broadway type contract in Hollywood and San Francisco areas.

14) Chicago Off-Loop Theatres (COLT) - An Off-Broadway type contract in the Chicago area.

15) Letter-Form Agreement - Specially created contract to satisfy unusual situations.

16) Showcase - A non-salaried arrangement for limited run showcases in New York area in theatres seating less than 100.

17) Outdoor Drama Festival - Covering outdoor pageants like the "Lost Colony" in Virginia.

18) Cafe Contract - Production presented in cafes where food or beverages may be sold.

19) Guest Artist Agreement - For use in universities and community theatres where one or more Equity members perform with students.

20) Actor - Teacher Contract - For use in educational institutions where one or more Equity members teach and perform with students.

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